

# 2026 Sang Soo Lee Award Winner

## Bishnu P Pal Named the 2026 Sang Soo Lee Award Recipient



[Optica](#) and the Optical Society of Korea ([OSK](#)) are pleased to name Bishnu P Pal, Ecole Centrale School of Engineering, Mahindra University, India, the 2026 [Sang Soo Lee Award](#) recipient. Pal is honored for several decades of pioneering contributions and passionate leadership of several photonics initiatives in India, and nurturing of their growth through education, research, and outreach.

Pal is Professor and Chair of Physics (School of Engineering) and Dean of Academics at Mahindra University. He spent much of his academic career at the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, where he also served as Chair of Physics (2007–2011).

Over the years, he has served the global optics and photonics community through several leadership positions, including the Optica Board of Directors, International Council, and Publications Council. He has also served as President of the Optical Society of India (OSI), Associate Vice-President of the IEEE Photonics Society's Membership Council, and on the editorial advisory boards of leading international journals, including *IEEE's Photonics Journal*. As President of OSI, he established the OSI Foundation and he served as India's nodal contact for UNESCO's IYL Steering Committee

Upon joining IIT Delhi in late 1977, he was tasked with developing and building a fiber-optics laboratory. Soon after, he rewrote a crucial state-of-the-art report on the scope of indigenous development in photonics. This report became instrumental in shaping the Department of Science and Technology's (DST) investment priorities in photonics at that time. In early 1979, Bishnu played a key role in the execution of a DST-sponsored project at IIT Delhi, which led to the development of a top-class Fiber Optics Laboratory that later served as a national hub for training faculty from across India. This project laid the foundation for a pioneering interdisciplinary MTech program in Optoelectronics and Optical Communication jointly with the EE department, one of the first of its kind in India. After his retirement from IITD, he joined

Mahindra University when it was newly established in 2014. As a result of his leadership, the institution received full-fledged university status in 2017.



His research spanned specialty-optical fibers, sensors and components, mid-infrared and terahertz fibers, silicon photonic components, and light localization in disordered waveguide lattice. His recent research has expanded into emerging frontiers such as topological fiber designs, exceptional points in non-Hermitian photonic systems, and time crystals. His research resulted in numerous well-cited journal publications, invited and plenary lectures worldwide, and four widely-used research monographs and several book chapters.

Pal is a Fellow of Optica, SPIE, and the National Academy of Sciences India, a Distinguished Fellow of OSI, and a Senior Member of IEEE. He is an Alexander von Humboldt Fellow, Fulbright Scholar and Honorary Foreign Member of the Royal Norwegian Academy of Sciences and Letters. His additional awards include the Esther Hoffman Beller Medal, Maria J. Yzuel Educator Award, and Prof A. Selvarajan Award.

Established in 2013, the Lee Award recognizes outstanding leadership in founding or growing an optics and photonics community in a specific population, anywhere in the world. It honors Prof. Sang Soo Lee for his pioneering role in establishing optics in the Republic of Korea. The award is jointly presented in even years by Optica and Optical Society of Korea (OSK), and is endowed by Optica, OSK, and the family of Sang Soo Lee.

**About Optica** [Optica](#), Advancing Optics and Photonics Worldwide, is the society dedicated to promoting the generation, application, archiving and dissemination of knowledge in the field. Founded in 1916, it is the leading organization for scientists, engineers, business professionals, students and others interested in the science of light. Optica's renowned publications, meetings, online resources and in-person activities fuel discoveries, shape real-life applications and accelerate scientific, technical and educational achievement.

**About the Optical Society of Korea** Founded in 1989, the [Optical Society of Korea](#) (OSK) is the leading academic society in the field of optics and photonics in Korea. OSK provides academic activities including domestic and international optics conferences, tutorials, seminars, workshops, and publishing services including journals, technical digests, monographs, and technical bulletins.

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